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ABSTRACT

Responding to a need expressed by a number of active foreign language teaching professionals, the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) began in 1972 to explore the possibility of a new national foreign language program. A steering committee was appointed by the MLA Executive Council to draft an outline of such a program. The present work is the final report of that committee. The report begins with a description of the steering committee and its goals and a brief history of foreign language teaching in America. The necessity of viewing language study as a humanistic endeavor with a vital humanizing power is discussed in Section 3. In Section 4, called "An Outline for Action," specific suggestions are made concerning: (1) public awarness of the importance of language study, (2) professional awareness and coordination, (3) classroom organization and techniques, (4) extracurricular programs, (5) bilingual education, (6) the uncommonly taught languages, and (7) quality control and national standards for language teaching and teacher training. (Author/PMP)

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A NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR THE 1970's

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I. Introduction

Responding to a need expressed by a number of active leaders of the foreign language teaching profession, the Modern Language Association of America in 1972 undertook to explore the possibility of a new national foreign language program, one which in the coming decade would make a significant impact, not only on education, but on all of American society. A steering committee for such a program was appointed by the MLA Executive Council; during the 1972-73 school year that committee, supported by funds from the U.S. Office of Education, met on four occasions at MLA Headquarters to draft the outline of a "National Foreign Language Program for the 1970's." The committee, which included members of diverse organizational and institutional components of the profession and which worked in conjunction with staff representatives from both the Modern Language Association and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, conceived of the "program" not as a self-contained project to be directed by the MLA or by ACTFL, but as a master plan for a concerted effort on the part of all interested persons, organizations, and institutions. The program as such is therefore not the "property" of the MLA or of any single organization, for the tasks outlined in it demand the participation and good will of all the human and institutional resources at hand.

Members of the steering committee were:

James E. Alatis, Professor of Linguistics and Modern Greek and Associate Dean of the School of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University

Jermaine D. Arendt, Consultant in Foreign Languages, Minneapolis Public Schools

Joseph Axelrod, Professor in the Humanities and Chairman of Comparative Literature, California State University, San Francisco; and Lecturer in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley

Mills F. Edgerton, Jr., Professor of Modern Languages and Linguistics and Chairman of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, Bucknell University

Wilga M. Rivers, Professor of French, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Frank G. Ryder, Professor of German, University of Virginia

Rebecca M. Valette, Professor of French and Director of the Language Laboratory, Boston College

In addition, the following participated in all or part of the four committee meetings: Warren Born (Director of the MLA/ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics), Richard I. Brod (Director of MLA Foreign Language Programs), C. Edward Scebold (Executive Secretary of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), William D. Schaefer (Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association), and Richard T. Thompson (Director of the Division of Foreign Studies, U.S. Office of Education). MLA staff members Kathryn Buck and Cheryl Dernorsek assisted. Kenneth W. Mildenberger (Deputy Executive Secretary of the MLA) moderated and prepared materials for the meetings.

II. A Capsule History of Foreign Language Teaching in America

When in 1883 a small group of professors met to organize the Modern Language Association of America and sought thereby to find a place for the modern languages in the college curriculum, the study of Latin and Ancient Greek almost totally dominated the humanities curriculum at both the secondary schools and the colleges. By 1915, however, the situation had changed dramatically, with the percentage of public high school students enrolled in modern language courses (35.9%) almost equal to the percentage studying Latin (37.3%), a figure that in 1900 had been 50.6%. Moreover, by 1915 approximately 90% of American colleges had introduced an entrance requirement calling for proficiency in at least one modern foreign language.

With World War I, however, and the isolationist attitudes that followed it, Americans came to view all things "foreign," including foreign languages, as suspect; the study of German, which was particularly vulnerable, decreased from 24.4% of the high school population in 1915 to 0.6% in 1922, and a number of states even attempted to legislate against the teaching of foreign languages. Thus in the thirty year period from the end of World War I through World War II, language study in American high schools continued a gradual decline, until by 1949 Latin enrollments had dropped to 7.8% and all modern languages totalled only 13.7%. Colleges responded accordingly, and the foreign language entrance requirement declined from the high of nearly 90% in 1915 to a level that even today is only slightly above 25%.

When during World War II there developed a pressing need for language instruction to prepare American servicemen for operations in Europe and the Far East, formal American education was almost totally unequipped to meet the challenge, not only because of the relatively insignificant position of language programs within the colleges and universities, but because these programs were concerned primarily with grammar and reading comprehension and paid little attention to listening comprehension, speaking, and writing. This attitude toward language study was in large part an inheritance from the nineteenth-century emphasis on the classical languages, when the study of Latin had primarily been construed as a mind-broadening exercise in translation, and even as late as the 1920's a foreign language study financed by the Carnegie Corporation confirmed this attitude by concluding that reading was the only attainable objective in the public secondary schools. Reading and translating, however, were not the skills needed by the occupying forces in Europe and the Pacific. To meet this need leaders of the newly emerging field of structural linguistics developed crash programs in language acquisition for the armed forces language schools. The experience gained in these programs provided a basis for the subsequent development and eventual acceptance of the audiolingual approach to foreign language teaching.

The change in attitude became noticeable in the 1950's, specifically in 1952 with the Modern Language Association's first effort at a national Foreign Language Program. The FLP, which for over six years received financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, set out to discover current

needs and to recommend appropriate changes in foreign language teaching. It produced a number of policy statements which, in brief, recognized that there are a variety of values in and approaches to language study; that an early start, preferably in elementary school, should be encouraged; that there was a need for a longer sequence of study and for experimentation with new tools made available by technology; that an emphasis should be placed on listening comprehension and speaking, as well as reading and writing; that there should be developed within universities substantial study centers, each concentrating upon a discrete region of the world; and that far greater stress should be placed upon the inherent humanistic values of language learning.

Concurrently during the 1950's the U.S. Government was, of course, becoming increasingly concerned about international developments in Europe and the Far East, and by the Spring of 1957 the Office of Education, at the request of the President's National Security Council, had drafted legislative proposals for federal aid to education, with much of the intent and even phrasing in its "Language Development Program" adopted directly from policy statements of the Modern Language Association's FLP. The stage was set for the passage in 1958, following Sputnik, of the National Defense Education Act, in which foreign language study was a major concern.

Although assistance for language studies was contained in many sections of the NDEA program, it was Title VI, the "Language Development Program," that carried the burden of financial support. Title VI authorized institutes for language teachers, in which some 50,000 teachers have participated; it authorized matching federal aid to college and university language and area centers, with 107 such centers receiving assistance at the peak of the program; it offered undergraduate and graduate fellowships to thousands of students in language and area studies; and it made available large sums of contract money for the development of instructional materials in some 150 languages. Under another Title in the Act, matching funds engendered the installation of 20,000 or more electronic "language laboratories" in secondary schools.

Now, some fifteen years after passage of the Act, most of the NDEA programs have run their course, and although it is too early for a full assessment, a few tentative conclusions may be ventured as regards the "Language Development Program."

1. Although a variety of useful instructional materials and techniques were developed for teaching basic language skills and significant developmental support was provided to area studies, the almost single-minded aim of the program--teaching basic communication skills--minimized other potential values in language study almost as severely as had the earlier aim of teaching mainly grammar and reading.

2. The rapid development of structural linguistics, especially in the analysis of the "less-taught" languages, created in language teachers, many of whom had long been openly suspicious of linguistics, an acceptance of new kinds of materials and approaches.

3. Finally, there occurred at least the beginning of the "professionalization" of language teachers, an appreciation of the problems and issues in the teaching of any and all languages, experience in administrative matters, and national rather than merely local communication. Before NDEA only three states employed language supervisors at a state-wide level, but, with NDEA assistance, by 1964 nearly every state had a system of foreign language supervision. Moreover, prior to NDEA people with "professional" competence on a national level could be counted in the dozens, but by the mid-'60's there were hundreds of such individuals, a fact which prompted the MLA in 1966 to finance the establishment of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, a national membership organization for teachers of any language, at any level of education, concerned about the professional and pedagogical aspects of language teaching.

In the 1970's, then, some significant achievements can be looked back upon as a result of the NDEA programs, but today a new set of conditions prevail and new kinds of problems face the profession. Partly resulting from the erosion of subject requirements traditionally considered to be the basis for a liberal education (generated, in large part, by the "campus unrest" of the middle and late '60's), partly resulting from the increasingly high cost of education in a society beset by the fears (and realities) of recession and inflation, the study of foreign languages in America is once again in jeopardy. In the elementary schools language instruction has been virtually discarded as an "expensive frill." In the secondary schools budgetary pressure is seriously affecting both the quality of instruction and the number and kinds of language courses being offered. Between the fall of 1970 and the fall of 1972, college and university language registrations have decreased by 10%, a loss of more than 100,000 students, with dramatic decreases in French (19%), German (13.3%), and even Spanish (7.2%), today the most popular of all the foreign languages taught in the U.S. In sum, the situation is serious enough to suggest that reevaluation is in order, that the traditional curriculum in foreign languages needs to be augmented by other kinds of language offerings, and that the time is indeed ripe for a new multilevel, multifaceted national program.

III. A Rationale for the 1970's

It seems clear, even on a cursory examination of the history of language study in America, that neither the traditional "grammar and reading" nor the "communication skills" approaches are in and by themselves ultimately satisfying or effective. Obviously both continue to meet certain kinds of needs and should continue to be developed as legitimate approaches to language acquisition , but what has been lacking in the past and still is lacking in most of our present programs is an overriding philosophical awareness of the idea--for which there exists ample testimony from any number of successful language teachers--that language study is at heart a humanistic endeavor with a vital humanizing power. This power is neither accidental nor mystical, for if we recognize a basic humanistic objective to be the development of rational, responsive, and responsible individuals communicating successfully in a complex world society, then language study is superbly, one might almost say uniquely, directed toward this end.

Most of us have only limited appreciation of the vast wealth of world culture. We may, however, come to cultivate appreciation through the study of a foreign language, or, to lesser extent, even through the study of a different dialect of our own language. Unfortunately, too few teachers have been trained, in vision or techniques, to employ such an approach to language learning, to see the humanistic value as a fundamental objective. Similarly, instructional materials too often merely suggest a humanistic objective, if they perceive it at all, as a somewhat gratuitous by-product.

Language is a function not simply of the human mind but of the culture in which minds have evolved. Techniques must be discovered and disseminated so that more teachers become concerned not only with grammar, vocabulary, sounds, orthography, translation, but with the relevance of language to an understanding of the various cultures in which languages have developed. The "culture" approach to language teaching is of course not new and many teachers have developed their own techniques and materials for such an approach. Most, however, have not, and thus it must be a basic goal of the present decade to make the inherent humanizing value a central purpose of language study.

Language acquisition per se is, of course, only a part of it, for in acquiring basic language skills the student inevitably deals with "documents"--magazines, newspapers, films, poems, plays, novels--that mirror the "way of life" of the people who communicate in and think in the particular language. The content of a language course, is, therefore, in itself a contributing factor to the humanistic development of the student and should be viewed, not so much as a means to the end (reading comprehension) but as an end in itself. A foreign language is not a simple recoding of concepts common to all men; it is the medium for expressing the intellectual and emotional life of that culture.

This "humanistic" rationale differs from previous philosophical goals not simply in kind but in degree of importance, for it carries the rewards of self-enrichment, both for the individual and the society. Diversity in approach as well as in recognition of a variety of needs and interests is surely essential in language programs of the 1970's, but the emphasis on humanistic values encompasses all diversity and provides the catalyst for new directions.

IV. An Outline for Action

What follows is an outline for action, divided, for the sake of orderly presentation, into seven sections. Although the outline attempts to be all-inclusive, the seven sections are by no means mutually exclusive, since efforts in any one area inevitably influence efforts in other areas. Behind each section there is, however, a basic premise, summarized as follows:

1. The American public must be more fully informed of the value and importance of language study, and every effort must be made to encourage adults and children alike to attain proficiency in at least one "second" language.

2. In order to increase awareness of new developments in teaching methods, in curricular development, and in instructional materials, as well as to broaden the scope of professional involvement, language teachers must be encouraged to subordinate self-interests and become more actively involved in the "profession" of foreign languages.

3. New kinds of instructional programs must be introduced or expanded in the schools and colleges so as to meet more effectively the needs and interests of the society, and new materials and teaching techniques must be evolved to replace those that are presently ineffective or outmoded.

4. The profession must work to develop and augment extracurricular programs of all kind, especially those appropriate for the adult population in the so-called educational periphery, and must learn to draw upon national resources (e.g., native speakers of foreign languages within the community) not previously recognized.

5. A major national effort must be made to develop and expand bilingual programs in the schools and colleges, and to assure that non-English speakers have adequate opportunity to learn English as their "second" language.

6. To support America's continued role as a leader in international politics and commerce, programs for the teaching of languages other than those commonly taught in formal education must be preserved and expanded, and efforts made to bring such languages into the mainstream of liberal education.

7. Finally, a realistic and workable system must be developed to assure national standards in language achievement and quality control in the training of teachers as well as in teaching itself.

To reduce duplication of effort and to orchestrate the work of the profession in the various areas of concern, some kind of coordinating body will probably be needed, and substantial funding from public and private sources will be essential for many of the projects envisioned

within each area. The key words in the program are, however, "national" and "action," and thus the burden of responsibility must be shared by all individuals, associations, and institutions concerned with the need for a revitalized language effort.

Accordingly, within each of the seven sections that follow it is hoped that a number of specific projects and programs will be forthcoming from concerned parties. This "Outline for Action" makes no pretense at developing specific projects, although within each section suggestions are made as to the kind of programs that it is hoped foundations will support and that individuals, institutions, and professional associations will take the initiative in developing. The 'program" as such is simply the means for unifying--and providing visibility for--a national effort on the part of the entire profession.

A. Public Awareness

Although America has long prided itself on being a refuge for peoples of all countries and origins and today includes among its citizenry speakers of most of the languages of the world, the general attitude of the American public toward foreign language study is one of indifference, if not outright hostility. Even language teachers, who, paradoxically, specialize in communication, have shown little success in creating an attractive public image for language study, and it is only the commercial language schools, such as Berlitz, that publicly promote the value of language acquisition.

What is needed is an imaginative and far-reaching information campaign, a public relations effort aimed at all levels of the American public and employing all practicable media. Although local efforts--working through such organizations as the PTA or community centers and clubs such as the Lions or Rotarians--are essential in reaching the grass roots, the effort must be centered in a national campaign clearly identified as such. The Joint National Committee for Languages, a newly formed organization that includes representatives from all of the major language associations as well as ACTFL, might seek funding to set up a central office and a small working staff to coordinate efforts, and funding might also be sought for certain kinds of educational films or taped materials that could be used on a local level. But the main impact could come through an aggressive, carefully planned presentation drawing upon the resources of the many business organizations that have a vested interest in seeing the development of language learning. The international air carriers, for example, or the hotel chains; foreign manufacturers, especially of automobiles and appliances; tourist bureaus and foreign embassies; importers of foreign materials and food products--all of these and many others could be linked together in a national campaign that would reach the public through spot announcements on television and radio, through reminders in regular advertising carried in newspapers and magazines.

There is, moreover, "news value" in such a public relations effort, and network television in its "specials," as well as national magazines and newspapers in their feature articles, would find a wealth of human-interest material within the broad theme of "America's Linguistic Heritage." There are also large numbers of local "foreign interest" groups that could combine efforts with educational institutions and professional associations in promoting the campaign. The forthcoming Bicentennial Celebration is likely to provide many opportunities for such promotion. The point is that a public information effort must have high priority if a national program is to be truly effective.

B. Professional Awareness and Coordination

The communications problem does not merely involve the profession and the public, for a failure of communication continues to exist within the profession itself. The problem, insofar as it involves a group of individuals with a wide variety of specialized interests teaching at different grade levels, is of course not peculiar to foreign languages, but it is vastly

complicated in the area of languages because of the existence of a large number of autonomous, well-established regional and national associations among which members of the profession divide their allegiance and support. A college instructor of French in the state of Connecticut, for example, might be expected to participate in the activities of the American Association of Teachers of French (in time or under certain conditions also the Association des Professeurs Franco-Américains or the Société des Professeurs Français en Amérique), the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, the New England Foreign Language Association, the Modern Language Association of America, the Northeast Modern Language Association, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; his department will very likely belong to the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages and, if he has interest in linguistics or in teaching English to French speakers, he might also want to join the Linguistic Society of America and the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages--all of these organizations collecting dues, disseminating publications, and holding annual (and sometimes local chapter) meetings. Not all, very likely not any, Connecticut French teachers belong to even half of the associations listed above, and there are probably a good many language teachers throughout the country who do not belong to any association at all, but the point is that with the exception of ACTFL, none of the "individual membership" organizations provides a national perspective that encompasses all languages at all levels of education. Language teachers today therefore tend to think of themselves as a part of the "profession" of French teachers, or of foreign language teachers at a particular grade level, or within a particular state or region or district, but not as a part of a foreign language "profession" that has national identity and thus significant aggregate influence.

Fortunately, in recent years some important advances have been made in this direction. The influential and extremely active AAT's (American Association of Teachers of French, German, Spanish, etc.) are now working together and with ACTFL through The Joint National Committee for Languages; the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations is exploring modes of strengthening its collaboration with ACTFL, including a possible merger of its highly respected Modern Language Journal with ACTFL's more recently founded Foreign Language Annals; and the prestigious Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages has recently given its endorsement to ACTFL. There is, therefore, a welcome spirit of concord developing today among the diverse organizations, based on the recognition that until a unified professional "membership" can be identified there can never be a truly unified profession nor ever really unified action.

What is needed at this time is expansion of such efforts--expansion of a national network of special-topic workshops for teachers; broad distribution of a national newsletter or magazine concerned with developments in all areas of the profession; development of a national "Publications Center" comparable to that operated by the National Council of Teachers of English through which professional and pedagogical materials of all kind could be distributed to the profession; and, finally, a series of week-long summer seminars that would bring together representatives of all the different language associations to work out policies and mechanisms for active and enduring cooperation, and to develop and refine present means for transmittal of information to all teachers.

Most of the other "action" programs described in the present outline presuppose the existence of a unifying agency for the achievement of effective consensus and concerted action among members of the foreign language teaching profession. Existing agencies must be strengthened in ways that will extend their influence to as many teachers as possible.

C. The Classroom

What happens in the classroom--in terms of curriculum and course content, in instructional materials, and in teaching methods--is at the heart of the matter, and increased public and professional awareness will be to no avail unless they in part lead to, in part are anticipated by, significant changes in the classroom. Unlike many national educational systems with standard materials, rigid methodology and schedules, the American system does allow for pluralistic approaches and for instructional creativity and experimentation. Today the foreign language classroom provides numerous examples of imaginative, innovative approaches to teaching. Unfortunately, however, the examples are isolated, mainly the work of a single creative individual or a single school or school system. Ways must be found to bring creativity and innovation into all school and college classrooms routinely and systematically.

Changes of the kind envisioned in this program are not easily realized, for no national program can legislate intelligence and sensitivity in program development and teaching methods. The professional associations must look to the institutions, and the institutions must look to themselves. An expanded information network as proposed above in the section on "Professional Awareness and Cooperation" would be of immense help in disseminating new ideas, in providing appropriate studies of experimental programs that have proven to be effective; clearly there is continued need for extramural funding in support of new programs and new materials. But there is at present no dearth of ideas for change; what is lacking is action, change itself, and this only the institutions, and the individual teachers, can bring about.

1. Curriculum. At present curricular orthodoxy continues to center on the "grammar and reading" and/or the "communication skills" approach, and in many if not most programs in the schools and colleges there is little in way of diversity beyond these basic kinds of courses. The learning of a language in order to study its literature has always been at the heart of the discipline, and will no doubt remain so. The difference as projected in this program involves a matter of emphasis, the broader humanistic values of a particular work being stressed instead of merely the text itself, and thus in literature-oriented courses departments would be well advised to expand humanistic aspects for the non-major and to explore the possibility of initially attracting students to the foreign language through teaching its literature in English translation. An equally promising area for development, though hardly new, is in shifting the emphasis from "language and literature" to "language and culture," with the stress placed on the country, its people, its customs, its total "way of life." Or yet another possibility is in the development of courses about human language, rather than courses in a particular language, for the nature of human linguistic communication, in all of its philosophic, social, geographic, and ethnic historical implications, can be an exciting humanistic study in itself.

There are also countless opportunities to develop engaging new courses directed toward the special interests of students majoring in history or economics or sociology or political science or any number of other disciplines. The business major, for instance, increasingly faces the prospect of employment in a company that has interests abroad; to develop at least basic communication skills in a second language, in conjunction with a fuller understanding of business practices, customs, and laws in the country of that language, would add a pragmatic value to the humanistic, and attract to language courses students who at present avoid them because they appear to lack relevance to career goals or other educational interests.

Finally, within the area of basic communication skills, there is also much more that can be done to accommodate immediate goals, to provide a variety of special interest courses directed to meet the particular needs of students who, for example, merely want to use one aspect of a language--reading skill, for instance--as a tool for other studies or to enhance employment opportunities or job effectiveness.

2. Teaching Methods. New approaches demand new methods, and the keynote is once again flexibility--experiment with exchange teaching and team teaching in interdisciplinary language courses, experiment with the total immersion concept within an integrated humanities sequence, innovative approaches to self-instruction in language laboratories which can involve everything from simple film-tape cassettes to computers. Above all, the language teacher must learn to adapt the vast array of available approaches and methods to meet the needs of the students, whatever those needs might be. The language department should structure itself in such a way as to provide a variety of programs on which the student can be advised, for the point is that there is no panacea, no one "best" method for teaching a new language. The sensitive and responsible teacher has always recognized that form follows function, that the end, in good teaching, dictates the means.

3. Instructional Materials. New materials, of course, go hand in hand with new approaches and methods, and the most important task ahead is the development, for each language, of new materials which provide those humanistic insights on which this entire program is predicated. Whether talking about a new series of printed texts, new kinds of laboratory "software," or new instructional guides for the teacher, the emphasis must be shifted so as to include in all materials a fundamental awareness of the ultimate humanistic value in acquiring facility in a foreign language, in becoming familiar with its literature and with the culture in which it evolved.

The question, however, remains--how to bring about the necessary changes in today's classroom. As stated above, there are no easy answers, but what follows are a few examples of the kind of projects that might realistically be expected to provoke immediate as well as long-range change; the list, needless to say, could be and will be expanded many times over.

1. Of immediate assistance in invoking change would be the production, even if for a limited three to five year period, of a special monthly newsletter mailed to every member of the profession and devoted entirely to summary reports of classroom experiments that have produced positive results (indeed, negative results would also be of use). The ERIC Clearinghouse of Languages and Linguistics already collects a good deal of such material, but

what is projected here is a virtual bombardment of the schools, school districts, colleges, and universities--and of all the teachers in language areas within such institutions--with new ideas, new approaches, new materials, so that the college-level Spanish teacher in, say, Iowa, would know about the success (or failure) that the French teacher in, say, Louisiana, has had with a particular kind of total immersion "culture" course; new programs in an elementary school district in Washington would be broadcast to all other school districts; the availability of and means of access to new kinds of film programs would be transmitted to all concerned. And so on. ACTFL and the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research have recently collaborated in producing a valuable study of selected innovative language programs in the secondary schools and such a project might well be continued for different educational levels, but what is proposed here is far more ambitious in terms of scope and dissemination of information. In conjunction with an effective public awareness campaign, it could indeed make a significant impact in way of enriching what presently occurs in the classroom.

2. For a number of years now the Modern Language Association, with assistance from the U.S. Office of Education, has provided the profession with regular foreign language enrollment surveys, and thus every two years we have been able to see that registrations in the colleges and universities have risen for one particular language, declined for another. Such information is useful and important, but it does not get inside the classroom, does not make a connection between rising or falling enrollments and the kinds of programs within which the changes have occurred. To be informed that, say, Italian enrollments in one state or district have risen over a two-year period whereas in another they have declined dramatically is to know something--but not very much. To go behind such figures and try to discover why one program is successfully attracting students is to know a good deal, and the dissemination of such information in a series of reports over the next decade could be of immense value to enabling institutions to evaluate--and adjust--their own programs on the basis of national comparisons.

3. Finally, as a third example of a possible "action" program, specifically in the area of developing new instructional materials, there could be great rewards in a series of week-long conferences between a small group of successful and innovative teachers and a number of the commercial publishers who produce the bulk of present materials. The idea would be to work out an integrated program for the 1970's, especially in developing new kinds of "software" for those 20,000 or so language laboratories that were constructed during the peak years of NDEA. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that a new rationale, a new philosophical framework for language study demands new kinds of instructional materials, and unless the producers of such material can be brought to work effectively with the users, innovative programs will lack direction.

D. Beyond the Classroom

Although the present program for the most part reflects the identifiable interests and concerns of the profession of foreign language teachers in schools and colleges, it cannot be overlooked that a large (and growing) number of Americans receive training in language through study under non-academic auspices: commercial or proprietary schools, community courses, government language schools (e.g., the Defense Language Institute), "free"

universities, and the like. Normally Americans study languages in such courses to meet certain concrete, definable needs, yet these courses can serve just as well as traditional courses to introduce students to the humanistic values we believe to be inherent in language study, and the growth of such programs can only improve the general climate for language study in the United States.

The success of non-academic language courses suggests, first, that they are meeting needs that academic programs have ignored; second, that Americans are willing to pay for language courses that are flexible enough to meet their specific needs; and third, that the academic profession can learn much from an examination of non-academic programs, and can conceivably apply what they learn at least to their work in adult education and community programs.

The number of students involved in "beyond the classroom" programs is unknown, but it could possibly equal or even exceed the number (roughly one million) presently engaged in language study within the college and university classroom. Whatever the number involved, the students are serious and highly motivated, and every effort must be made to promote and to coordinate such programs with work undertaken in formal education. As a starting point, a series of conferences should be funded that would bring together representatives of both areas, for, in and "beyond" the classroom, both groups are working toward the same end and, at least somewhere along the way, are frequently dealing with the same students.

A second area for language study beyond the classroom is rapidly becoming available through the mass media. Many of the tools developed over the past decade and now being utilized to at least some extent in formal education through the language laboratories are also of course employed by the commercial, government, and "educational periphery" language schools, and such utilization will continue to develop as rapidly as the "software" permits it to. What has not as yet been adequately employed on a national level is the inexpensive and highly effective means of language instruction through radio and television. What little is presently being done occurs on "Educational" or "Public Broadcasting" channels, and consists of taped or filmed language courses directed primarily at the pre-teen student. Cable and public access television, and especially the development of video cassettes, have now opened up, however, a vast new potential for bringing language instruction into millions of American homes. Some countries (Australia and Sweden, for example) have already made extensive use of radio for language study, and much can be learned from such experience. But what is needed in way of immediate action is an integrated effort on the part of commercial firms and the profession to develop humanistically oriented, adult series of filmed language courses in at least (to begin with) the major foreign languages. For the next few years, until home use of video tapes becomes a reality, the films could be made available to the public through cable, public access, or educational channels, or even through closed circuit television in libraries or community centers. But the profession would be ready for tomorrow today, and surely no single project in this entire program promises more immediate rewards or dramatic results than does the prospect of home video tapes in conjunction with home recorders--a veritable language laboratory for self-instruction in the living room.

A third resource area that goes "beyond the classroom" is what might be called our community resources, beginning with the family itself, for many American children are of course raised in homes where the parents speak a language other than English, and sometimes speak little or no English at all. To meet the needs of the non-English speaking American, or the American for whom English is very much a second language, there have evolved a large number of locally produced foreign language newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs. The "native" language in such families, and sometimes even in entire communities, tends to be preserved at least among the adult population, and parents frequently consider the native language to be a heritage that should be passed on to their English-speaking children. Such parents will take pride in seeing that their children learn to speak the native tongue fluently and correctly. (Thus the existence of a number of community "after school" classes, and thus in part the continued growth of college-level enrollments in "ethnic" languages such as Chinese, Hebrew, Polish, and Modern Greek.) These "foreign language" families and communities are a tremendous national linguistic resource, a resource that includes millions of Americans for whom German, Italian, Spanish, and so on are not "foreign" languages at all. To tap this resource in a constructive manner would not only give greater visibility to the fact that America is already a multi-lingual country, but would encourage others to learn a second language and thus better understand and more directly participate in the culture and traditions represented by that language. The effect would be to open up an entirely new kind of societal enrichment. By way of action, what is first needed, and is perhaps best attained by working through the various language associations, is contact with established "foreign community" organizations and development of a working relationship with the schools and colleges as well as the non-institutional language schools so as to draw upon community resources for materials, cultural "exchange," possibly tutors or classroom informants, and certainly community support in promoting a national awareness campaign for language study.

A fourth and final area in this section centers on the obvious but largely overlooked opportunities for language study through travel abroad. A large number of programs, "Junior Year Abroad" and so on, already exist through formal educational channels, but with increasingly large numbers of Americans vacationing, studying, and working abroad, there is increased opportunity for learning the foreign language, or at least initiating study, while in the foreign country. Commercial language schools do of course exist in all foreign countries, but little or nothing has been attempted by either the American or foreign governments to encourage, or to make it easier for, touring Americans to learn something about the customs and traditions of a particular country, much less to be introduced to its language. There are an unlimited number of possibilities involving not only national governments but international air carriers, tourist agencies, international hotels, and so on, all of which could in a number of ways contribute to developing in the American tourist at least a sensitivity to language difference, and perhaps some limited ability at basic conversational and reading skills. Useful models are available in a growing number of short term programs--usually two weeks--organized by foreign language and social studies teachers at the secondary

school level, and in formal and informal student exchange programs. Everyone agrees that the best "language laboratory" of all is the foreign country itself; ways must be found to make better use of the foreign travel experience.

E. Bilingual Education

Whether one wishes to view bilingual education in America as an effective method for teaching English to the non-speaker at the same time that facility in the native tongue is maintained and developed, or, from a different perspective, as a means for preserving the native linguistic and cultural heritage while enabling the non-speaker to function in an English-speaking society, matters little. Since 1965 and the passage of the Bilingual Education Act, federal funds have been available to support programs that provide instruction in two languages, with both languages as media of instruction for any part or all of the curricula, and today bilingual programs exist or are being developed at all levels of education.

The problem at present is that there is no central office or agency concentrating solely on bilingual programs, with the result that there is little in way of current information exchange, no central means for identification of exemplary model programs and teaching materials, no evaluative procedure, and little in way of practical comparative cultural studies or of applied contrastive linguistic studies. Although perhaps as many as a dozen professional associations as well as a number of national and regional research organizations have active interests in the area, what is needed is a national office to coordinate and exchange information, to encourage higher education to develop specialized teacher-training programs for bilingual and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instructors, and to assure that local needs are being met adequately through the federal programs directed at the schools.

Such interests--especially insofar as they involve the teaching of English--may seem peripheral to a national "foreign" language program, but bilingual education is important in such a program because (1) it does involve language learning "bilingually" in that native speakers of English learn the language and culture of their "minority" classmates who in turn are learning standard English; (2) from a social and humanistic viewpoint the potential exists for literally millions of youngsters (the Mexican-American population of the Southwest alone is estimated at four million) to develop a mutual respect for differing heritages and customs; and (3) such programs promise for ethnic groups the maintenance and improvement of language competencies which may effectively serve society in years to come. The highest possible priority should therefore be assigned to this area in the coming decade.

F. The Less Commonly Taught Languages

The traditional languages of American education have been those of western Europe: French, German, Spanish, on a smaller scale Italian, and, in steadily decreasing numbers, Latin. The study of non-western languages and cultures, including Russian, was rare on American campuses until the late 1950's, when support for such study became available under the National

Defense Education Act as part of an expression of the "national interest" of the United States. The NDEA supported, among other things, language institutes, language and area training centers, and research. The interest and support on the part of government, business, and the intellectual community coincided, in the mid-1960's, with growing student interest in Asian and African cultures, life styles, social structures, and religions. Enrollments in the less commonly taught languages increased generally more than fourfold between 1960 and 1972, those of Chinese more than fivefold. Indeed, the continuing growth of enrollments in Chinese provides evidence that student interest may often relate directly to external political developments.

Language and area studies in the less commonly taught fields are extremely expensive and have generally relied upon federal support, most of which has been directed toward the training of specialists. As, however, interest in these fields broadens to include undergraduate students, the business community, and the public at large, it is evident that this support must now extend beyond the training of researchers to encompass the undergraduate and school levels and the training of teachers for these levels. The establishment and maintenance of the less commonly taught languages as an integral component of American education will require considerable outside support as well as thoughtful planning on the part of the teaching profession. Following are the points of primary concern:

1. Range, type, and amount of offerings. Although at present there is sufficient instruction in the existing university language and area centers to satisfy specialist needs, if general educational needs are to be met, instruction will have to be increased. Expansion is needed at two levels. At the beginning level, support might well be given to bilingual projects operating in ethnic centers; at the advanced or graduate level there should be provision for intensive courses followed by fellowships and other study opportunities in the target language countries.

2. Goals of instruction. In terms of general education, a variety of goals should be recognized for language instruction, and various levels and combinations of competence must be accepted as justifiable objectives. Above all, the emphasis should be on competence and performance, determined by the best available instruments for evaluating performance in the various language skills, not upon courses and credit hours. Since the learning goals will very often involve the research uses of the less commonly taught languages in other disciplines, liaison should be established with these related disciplines (anthropology, history, sociology, linguistics, religion, etc.). The growing ethnicity in our culture must also be taken into account, since in a multiethnic culture it becomes particularly important to devise ways of educating people to acquire a language more autonomously.

3. Cost. Admittedly, instruction in the less commonly taught languages is expensive. The case must be made for continued subsidy on the part of foundations and government, justifying it in terms of both a broad and a special role for the less commonly taught languages, while recognizing that the survival of such instruction will necessarily depend upon institutional cooperation through consortia and other kinds of pooled resources.

4. Curricular formulation. Among the most important problems here is that of overcoming curricular rigidity. It must be recognized at the outset that instruction in the less commonly taught languages cannot be locked into the conventional patterns of instruction. Experimentation of all kinds must be encouraged, ranging from self-instruction and independent study to strictly controlled intensive or "total immersion" programs. It must also be understood that the achievement of real proficiency in language skills will generally require some on-site experience in an area where the language is spoken. Considerable attention must be paid to the development of well-constructed and reasonably economical instructional materials. Computer-assisted instruction may provide a significant breakthrough here, and the investment of funds in this area would be timely and appropriate.

5. Personnel. While encouraging flexibility, the profession must also recognize that by no means all of the potentially useful teachers of the less commonly taught languages will necessarily fit into the conventional academic patterns or university hierarchy. The possibility of using para-professionals should be explored, with special emphasis upon selecting and training the kind of service-oriented young people who, for one reason or other (Peace Corps, military service, etc.), have acquired competence in one or more of the less commonly taught languages.

6. Use. Since actual use is the primary though not necessarily the sole motive in learning a foreign language, it is important that those disciplines for which proficiency in the less commonly taught languages is advantageous be encouraged to assist in the clearer definition and exploitation of the area concept. This includes the study of literature, both as an aesthetic experience and as an index of culture. Cooperation with the professional area associations is essential and must be actively sought.

At the present time there exists no single agency or organization which is able to provide continuing and comprehensive attention to the special problems of the less-taught languages. It seems essential that staff and an advisory board be funded to facilitate the collection of relevant information and to serve as liaison and coordination between the teachers of these languages and the Government, interested colleges and universities, foundations, and related associations, including those with a concern for area studies.

G. Quality Control and National Standards

The broad language program which is here proposed offers a variety of learning opportunities to the American public of all ages. By multiplying these opportunities, however, the program also runs the danger of a failure of control of quality in instruction and in achievement. The responsibility for effective quality control falls squarely upon the foreign language teaching profession, and indeed the task of achieving and maintaining such control is inseparable from the need for promoting "professional awareness."

There are three main points of control where evaluation is necessary: (1) teacher training and qualification; (2) student achievement; and (3)

instructional materials. The foreign language teaching profession has had substantial and useful experience in all three areas, but a full-scale reassessment of this experience is needed, on a much broader base of professional consensus than was possible in the past. The achievement of such consensus will require a substantial program of research and information-gathering plus the full mobilization of the leadership of the profession through its national, local, and special-interest organizations. Each of the three control points will require a separate approach.

1. Teacher training and qualification. One of the chronic problems facing the foreign language teaching profession is the existence of amateurishness within its ranks. All too often, teachers are certified to teach on the basis of academic credits alone, without reference to their fluency in the language or knowledge of its culture; on the college level, beginning instructors may find that they have been thoroughly trained in the history and analysis of literature, but are sadly lacking in the skills, techniques, and even the appropriate orientation for teaching elementary language courses. And the amateurishness is compounded by thoughtless administrators who assume either that any educated native, whether appropriately trained or not, is competent to teach his own language, or that languages are interchangeable, and a specialist in German can easily "double" in Spanish in the interest of administrative expediency. Clearly, the burden falls upon foreign language teachers to assert their professionalism by working toward the development of a system of standardized quality control in teacher preparation and qualification.

With financing from the National Defense Education Act, the MLA (in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service) developed in the late 1950's a complex set of proficiency tests for teachers and advanced students of five different languages (French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish), testing competency in (a) listening comprehension, (b) speaking, (c) reading, (d) writing, (e) applied linguistics, (f) civilization and culture, and (g) professional preparation. These tests were widely used during the 1960's, and were valuable in assessing the success of NDEA-supported summer institutes and college programs designed to prepare language teachers for the schools. But they never achieved universal acceptance, especially among colleges and universities, and they have lately fallen into disuse. In the late 1960's the MLA undertook a detailed assessment of the validity and limitations of its proficiency tests. This assessment needs to be updated and expanded; in the present climate of thinking in the profession, its conclusions could well become the nucleus of a new consensus and of a new program for action.

2. Student Achievement. As foreign language teaching moved, in the late 1950's and 1960's, from traditional grammar-translation teaching to the audiolingual approach, new devices for the measurement of student achievement had to be developed at all levels. Changes of approach and emphasis increased the need for standardized tests independent of any specific texts or materials. The placement of college freshmen at post-beginning levels became particularly problematic, and the difficulties of articulation were compounded by the rapid proliferation of two-year colleges. Despite extensive research and professional discussion, foreign language teachers have not yet been able to arrive at the kind of standardization necessary to maintain continuity of language instruction between levels. Again, efforts to find a solution to this problem will need to rest upon a broad professional consensus concerning the need for standardization and control.

3. Instructional materials. For the most part, instructional materials used in schools and colleges are produced by commercial publishers, many of whom have demonstrated excellent sensitivity to the needs of the foreign language profession. Moving now into a new phase of language teaching, the profession should welcome the continuing support of the responsible publishing industry. At the same time, foreign-produced materials have become increasingly available and attractive, and there is a growing trend toward supplementing or even replacing traditional textbooks with cassettes, videotapes, and individualized programs of various kinds. Changing approaches to the teaching of culture have rendered many well-established texts obsolete. An honest, reliable system is needed for reviewing and evaluating the variety of materials offered to language teachers at all levels. In the 1960's the MLA directed a program in which materials for language teaching in elementary and secondary schools were evaluated in great detail. A new program must be developed, covering both secondary and higher education, and including guidance in the use of specialized materials for programmed instruction, audiovisual reinforcement, and the like.

A program of action in the area of quality control will of necessity be closely coordinated with activities in the area of professional awareness. Following is a minimal list of the kinds of activities likely to be required.

(a) Updated research on the certification requirements of the various states for elementary and secondary school teachers, including a close examination of performance-based certification and its effects on teacher education curricula.

(b) Updated research on programs of training and supervision of graduate teaching assistants in college and university foreign language departments.

(c) Research on the licensing practices of comparable professions: law, medicine, engineering, etc. Following this, conferences of state officials, measurement specialists, school and college administrators.

(d) National conferences of specialists in the fields of foreign language teacher education, measurement, certification, and college teacher training.

(e) Leadership conferences on the teaching-training component of doctoral programs in foreign languages; specialized conferences on the training of teachers of language and literature for junior and community colleges.

(f) Review of the MLA's Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students: research, technical conferences, and leadership conferences.

(g) Updated research on achievement and placement tests in foreign languages; broad national discussion through conferences and open meetings.

(h) Updated comprehensive research on materials, both printed and audiovisual, for the teaching of foreign languages at all levels. Establishment of committees for the preparation of evaluative reports on teaching materials.